

McGill reporter

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27 November 1968

Political Science

The Positions and The Issues

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POLITICAL SCIENCE SECTION POSITION STATEMENT

Those of us who teach Political Science at McGill are fully persuaded that students, as members of the Political Science community, should participate in the making of decisions about programme and courses of study. If, in the past, participation was informal and intermittent, depending largely on the daily interactions between students and teachers, the time has come to provide for a degree of formal and explicit participation.

In working towards the new mechanisms of government it should be understood that faculty members have not only an obligation to respond to the present demands of students but also a wider obligation to their vocation. The work that goes on in universities has been going on for a long time. Those whose lives are bound up in the university, not just for the period of study for a degree but as a life work, must be responsible for the preservation and development of the possibility of scientific inquiry. So long as the university world maintains its present character, members of the Faculty have a duty to preserve or enhance the quality of the degree which their university gives. This is necessary in order to protect the reputation of the university and the interests of its students to whom the degree is a certificate of access to further study or some other aspect of their careers.

It is natural that students and teachers should not perceive their roles and outlooks in identical

terms. This leads them to somewhat different approaches to the question of structural change in the Political Science Section. And yet, when one considers the great gulf that separated the PSA and the Faculty when discussions first began some weeks ago, one cannot but be encouraged and impressed by the degree of rapprochement that seems to have been achieved.

The position of the Faculty is now fully crystallized. It is one that will be re-examined in the Fall of 1969, in the light of experience that will have been gained during the current session. Following is an outline of the essential points of our position on direct participation:

1) Student representatives will constitute one-third of the membership of the Section (seven in 1968-69).

2) One of the representative students to be elected to the Steering Committee.

3) One-third student membership on the Curriculum Committee (never less than two students).

4) Two student member (Ph. D. level) on an eight-man Committee on New Appointments. This Committee will have final power with respect to recommending new appointments and will carry out its deliberations under the rule of confidentiality.

5) A student representative on the Ph. D. Dissertation Committee and a student representative on the M.A. Dissertation Committee, unless the student whose dissertation proposal is under review does not wish to have a student representative on his Committee.

6) Decisions in the Section will be taken by majority vote except in the case of structural (constitutional) changes which will require a two-thirds majority vote of all members of the Section.

As far as we could ascertain these proposals, taken as a whole, contemplate a degree of student participation which goes beyond what has been conceded in comparable universities. They represent a radical innovation. They may not go as far as some students might wish but it would be an abuse of language to call them conservative or reactionary.

It is particularly important to understand the reasons for the way in which the proposals regarding new appointments were framed. The Section itself, with students participating, will determine the direction of its development in relation to the financial resources that are available. Development and innovation imply new courses and, in turn, new staff. The kind of new staff which is needed is pretty well determined by the decisions taken about curriculum and it is open to all members of the Political Science community to put forward names of those who

might be approached to become members of the Faculty. Once these large decisions are taken the problem of selecting from among available candidates the individuals who most clearly meet the requirements is, essentially, one of execution. We have proposed that there be student representation on the Committee which takes the executive action on new appointments. To be effective a committee of this sort must be given freedom to act within its terms of reference. It must be able to operate in such a way as to protect confidential personal information and to reach decisions which, almost invariably, must be made quickly if good appointments can be made under conditions of intense competition with other universities.

These proposals on student participation in the government of the Political Science Section reflect the desire to have the interests of the whole of our student body represented. If they are implemented we will, as a community, be making decisions which become part of the long-run development of our own part of the university. The spirit of reciprocal tolerance and an atmosphere of academic freedom are necessary conditions for the life of a university.

Note: The policy expressed in this statement was accepted by 11 members of the faculty with one opposed, two abstentions and one absent.

Students

POLITICAL SCIENCE ASSOCIATION POSITION STATEMENT

Although the story goes back further than September, this report will begin in September: that is when specific demands began to be formulated at meetings of the Political Science Association, after many hours of discussion by an ad hoc policy committee, through the summer months. Democratization of the section, and all faculty and section meetings to be open to students were the most immediate goals. The underlying aim was to seek ways of widening the scope of studies in the department through more student participation and a more evaluative orientation of the courses. As time progressed it seemed evident that parity for students was required, if any meaningful reforms were to be effected.

On September 27, the P.S.A. voted in a five-man executive of Messrs. August, Herscovici, Santiago, Edel and Furedi. Their election meant that undergraduates, honours, masters and Ph.D's were all represented. On October 11, the faculty of the Political Science section held its first open meeting. Students asked for parity and those members of faculty who did reply were quick to extinguish the notion of students' rights to equality. However, no counter-proposals were offered.

Eventually, on October 20, faculty came out with the offer of one-quarter representation on section, one-third on curriculum, nothing on appointments committee (a crucial area) and nothing on tenure, promotions and related matters. However, there was to be student representation on the administration committee.

P.S.A. at its October 30 meeting, attended by more than 200 people, threw out the counter proposal by 162 to 6. A teach-in for the end of the week was suggested and agreed upon. On the Friday, debates between faculty and students were held throughout the day lasting into early evening. A commission to discuss the whole question of student parity further was suggested by a faculty member, and P.S.A. executive promised to consider the proposal, on its own conditions.

Faculty rejected the conditions at the weekend, but P.S.A. voted on Wednesday, November 6, agreeing to the idea of a commission with conditions acceptable to both sides. P.S.A.'s part of the commission was to consist of the executive plus three co-opted members of the assembly - Messrs. Goldenberg, Cowen and Hynes. The latter declined the invitation. In essence, the commission was designed to explore the possibilities for agreement and generally there was a new spark of hope.

Student commissioners met with faculty members Mallory, Jackson, Waller and Brecher on Thursday and Friday, November 8 and 9. It was made explicit that 80 per cent



Professor Michael Brecher discusses issues at strike seminar on fourth floor of Leacock Building late yesterday afternoon.

of faculty were against parity. Faced with an impasse, P.S.A. climbed down and declared itself flexible on the question of parity and representation.

On Tuesday, November 12, the commission meeting, held on the most snowy night in Montreal for 40 years, became, inevitably, a bargaining session. Student commissioners stipulated as their minimum one-third representation on section with full voting powers. The offer was agreed upon and the representation was to be operational for all committees (including appointments committee) except for tenure and promotions. This was felt to be the only possible solution acceptable to both full bodies, i.e., faculty and all students. While the agreement was not binding on the commissioners, nevertheless they were expected to report the possibilities back to their respective assemblies, who would then vote on whether to accept the commission's compromise "package" or not.

Before student commissioners could report back to their own P.S.A. body, faculty held a closed meeting and took action in drawing up a new set of proposals, which were presented at a departmental open meeting Friday, November 15. The new proposals virtually struck all student representation off the appointments committee. At the first sign of student observers' protest, the Chairman of the department closed the meeting.

On Monday, November 18, P.S.A. unanimously rejected the most recent faculty proposals and in their stead countered with a proposed one-third representation on section with full ratification powers for the Appointments committee, one-third representation on curriculum committee, and an ultimatum that if such demands were not met within a week, direct action would be taken. In addition a motion was unanimously passed that faculty's meeting be open to students. As of Monday, November 25, the demands had not been met. Faculty had met on Wednesday, November 20 and on Thursday, November 21, when P.S.A. demands were rejected once more.

Briefly, P.S.A. demands were as follows:

(1) That P.S.A. establishes one-third representation on Section, with full ratification powers for the Appointments Committee;

That P.S.A. establishes one-third representation on Appointments

Committee, which will consist of one M.A. student, one Ph.D. student, one undergraduate student, two full professors, two associate professors, two assistant professors;

That P.S.A. establishes representation on Curriculum Committee;

That an ultimatum be presented to Faculty that if the above demands have not been met after one week from today (November 18), direct action will be taken.

(2) That Faculty makes its next meeting open to both students and faculty.

Both motions, in their entirety, were almost unanimously carried.

Resume

Both sides are agreed on:

- (1) one-third student representation on Section
- (2) one-third student representation on Curriculum Committee.

Both sides disagree on composition and operation of Appointments Function:

- (1) P.S.A. proposes one-third representation on Appointments Committee, which will consist of one M.A. student, one Ph. D. student, one undergraduate student, two full professors, two associate professors, two assistant professors. The Section is to have full ratification power.
- (2) Faculty proposes two student members (Ph. D. level) on an eight-man Committee on New Appointments. The Section is to determine the areas in which appointments are to be made and any member of Section may suggest names, but the Appointments Committee is to have final power with respect to recommending new appointments.

Faculty proposes:

- (1) One student representative on Steering Committee
- (2) One student representative on Ph. D. Dissertation Committee and one student representative on M.A. Dissertation Committee. These committees consider and approve proposals for dissertations.

Woods and Wong

Offer for Mediation

Professor J. R. Mallory,
Chairman,
Department of Economics
and Political Science

Mr. Arnold August,
Chairman,
Political Science Association

Dear Sirs:

Following representations to the Dean of Arts and Science from the A.S.U.S. Executive requesting that efforts be made to bring about a resolution of the dispute between the Political Science Section of the department of Economics and Political Science and the Political Science Association, the undersigned met and agreed to proffer their good offices to the parties in dispute.

It is our understanding that a negotiating committee has been established by the P.S.A. and that proposals to resume negotiations have been forwarded to Professor Mallory.

Should either of the parties wish to take advantage of our assistance we can be reached at:

Mr. P. Wong - 875-5510, ext. 65
Dean H.D. Woods - 392-5078

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Undergraduate Society

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Dean,
Faculty of Arts and Science

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Harry E. Thomas

ASSOCIATE EDITOR:
Jean-Louis Roy
French Canada Studies Programme

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